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# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER

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THE question has been started in some of our  
exchanges whether or not it is good judgment to  
teach a boy a trade, and many compliments have  
passed between the contending papers on the sub-  
ject, the lack or superabundance of pride being  
apparently the only phase that has been considered.

For a boy, intended to succeed as owner or  
controller of a technical business, it is very de-  
sirable that he be acquainted with the practical  
details of that business, for it is a peculiarly dan-  
gerous position for a man to be entirely at the  
mercy of his workmen. But for the boy with no  
such prospects, the boy who stands upon his own  
feet and sees before him only what he builds for  
himself and by himself, the possession of a trade  
education is more often a hindrance than a help.  
It teaches him that he has something to fall back  
upon, that he can earn laborers' wages at any  
time if he fails in everything else, and frequently  
this creates an indifference toward anything better  
or higher in a business way. This feeling of par-  
tial security is, of course, an unconscious and in-  
voluntary one, but works mischief equally sure.  
It is somewhat akin to the false safety felt by a  
man who carries a pistol and ventures into danger  
which he would otherwise avoid and escape.

A man with no such apparent relief behind  
him, realizes the necessity of increased efforts to  
succeed in whatever business has naturally fallen  
to him.

A fault in all calculations of this sort is that a  
higher estimate is put upon popular ability than it  
is entitled to. It is comparatively an unap-  
preciable number who rise above mediocrity, and  
this compels us to consider the claims of the masses  
only, and as these masses must remain either clerks  
or mechanics, common sense selects the clerks as  
most desirable in point of respectability and com-  
pensation.

PERSONS sending requests for sample copies  
will receive them by our regular mail which goes  
out twice per week. These requests being generally  
acknowledged at once, the acknowledgment will  
frequently be received some days before the sample  
copy. Our readers must not regard this as neglect,  
but as one of the necessary delays of business.

In reply to an inquiry, we would say that the  
architect of the Wallace house, Brooklyn, the  
decorations of which we illustrated in our Decem-  
ber issue, was Mr. Arthur Crooks, of this city.

THE day of the esthete is approaching a close.  
Oscar Wilde has cut his hair and consented to ap-  
pear in "store clothes;" there is melancholy lone-  
liness about the few disciples that still cling to the  
memory of his curly locks and Bloomer costume  
that excites sympathy. Oscar was the originator,  
and knew when the time came to give it up—that  
time followed closely upon the heels of his \$30,000  
trip to the United States, his followers, being but im-  
itators, don't know whether it is time to abandon  
the idea and hardly know how to do so, even  
though the time has come. The rapid conversation  
born with estheticism, the exaggerated fob charms,  
the solitary eye-glass, the flimsy carriage and the  
deliberate indifference, all prevail to a considerable  
extent, all have taken a hold that common sense  
will gradually, though not rapidly, loosen.

In the furnishing and decoration of the home  
estheticism shows greater decline than in any other  
direction; one may be willing to pervert his or her  
personal dress or characteristics or actions to ac-  
cord with some crazy idea he or she may enter-  
tain, because that costs nothing further than a  
sacrifice of sense or comfort and this is readily  
made; but, when the more serious duty of furnish-  
ing comes to be considered, and one is confronted  
with the esthete's dictum that sparseness is a guar-  
antee of good taste, then repudiation usually fol-  
lows, and the bare floor and bare wall and scant  
furniture are made to fit the true taste of the  
individual rather than the acquired.

It is interesting to watch the gradual dissolu-  
tion of the esthete.

WITH all the art teaching and art writing the  
taste of the public seems to be yet in a very de-  
perate condition of uncertainty. We were talking  
with the head of a large manufacturing house re-  
cently about his country orders and he showed us  
a correspondence that was interesting and at the  
same time threw light upon the demand for taste-  
ful articles.

The beginning of the correspondence was a  
request for samples of certain goods of his make,  
the reply to this request took with it some of the  
most delicately and beautifully tinted articles that  
one could well find, not esthetic, understand, but  
simply displaying the quietest and most refined  
taste; this brought an indignant response, de-  
manding to know why such weak looking stuff was  
sent, etc., etc., and made the sarcastic suggestion  
that it must not be supposed because their cus-  
tomers were located in the country, that they were  
necessarily behind the age, on the contrary, they  
were several paces ahead of the age. This neces-  
sitated a search for something "ahead of the age,"  
and an assortment of discarded pieces, radiant in  
color with brilliant greens and reds and other  
startling shades were discovered and dispatched.  
The acknowledgment of these was highly pleasing;  
they were just what was wanted and a requisition  
for a considerable quantity was made at once.

Did this reflect the taste of the dealer, or the  
demands of his customers?

We will begin, with our March issue, a series of  
articles, fully illustrated, descriptive of the prom-  
inent Washington homes, commencing of course  
with the White House, showing the new decora-  
tions, the principal rooms, etc. This will be fol-  
lowed by views of Secretary Whitney's house, and  
others.